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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS

Summary: From August 15-17, Taiwan's major Chinese-language continued to give significant news and editorial coverage to the damage caused by Typhoon Morakot and to the United States' decision to send military aircraft to help Taiwan in the post-typhoon rescue and relief efforts. Several major Chinese-language and English-language papers front-paged the U.S. rescue operations in Taiwan with banner headlines on August 17. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an op-ed in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" criticized the Ma administration's delay in accepting the U.S. rescue assistance and said the delay was caused by the Ma administration's decision to uphold the one China policy. End summary.

"U.S. Military's Relief [Operations] for Taiwan Is Testing Ma"

Lai I-chung, Executive Committee member of the Taiwan Thinktank, opined in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 70,000] (8/17):

"... AIT and Japan's Interchange Association are the only two foreign agencies that have set up offices in Kaohsiung, and they immediately realized the serious [damage] caused by Typhoon Morakot. Without the reports from these offices in Taiwan, the State Department, which insists on the one China policy, would not have overlooked the sensitive U.S.-China relations and expressed a willingness to send the U.S. military to assist [Taiwan]. It is impossible that Ma, who is incompetent in managing the affairs of state but is very sensitive to the one China [policy], was unaware of the military significance [of the move by the U.S. military]. Rumors had it that the National Security Council (NSC) had [earlier] suggested that [Ma] decline U.S. assistance first and then seek international assistance after China's Association for Relations across the Taiwan Strait had made donations [to Taiwan]. It is generally believed that the major reason [for doing so] was to uphold the one China [policy] and to lay bare [the Ma administration's] heart to Beijing. But [the problem is that the Ma administration] has missed the most precious first seventy-two hours [following the disaster], and numerous victims have either died or been injured.

"Given Taiwan's continuously chaotic disaster rescue system, in addition to [the concerns that the island's] original rescue capacity might be consumed by coordinating the U.S. military's rescue operations, the NSC, which was previously against the U.S. military's rescue assistance because of its insistence on upholding the one China [policy], will likely lose the trust [of both sides.] Thus, the NSC will not be able to contribute to the high-level communications between the two sides... As for [the NSC's role in] the more complicated follow-on operations, the results are unimaginable. New problems will ensue after the U.S. military is in Taiwan."

WANG